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G Magazine

CRATE-DIGGING WITH NOODLE

RUSSEL HOBBS ON GHOSTS

2D TALKS SYNTHS AND HIS LAST DAY ON EARTH

MURDOC NICCALS' GUIDE TO LOVE

GORILLAZ GRILL JAMIE HEWLETT & MORE INSIDE!

Gfoot

GFOOT.STORE

Stop the press, *Gorillaz* fans!

Stop the press, Gorillaz fans! Print is officially no longer dead, 'cos Murdoc Niccals is an editor now, as well as a modern day Mozart and sex idol. Is there any end to this man's talents, you're thinking? (Editor's note: no.) It's great being the editor. If I wanna go full caps I GO FULL CAPS. **BOLD AND UNDERLINED? NO FUCKING PROBLEMO**. WINGDINGS? ♠♎♐♦♎♒♦🏻. (Editor's note: use sparingly.) 2D wanted to get involved in editing the mag too, so I've entrusted him with the Tipp-Ex, a vital tool of the print trade. And told him to use it to paint my new conservatory.

Anyway, welcome to my little magazine; equal parts ***Melody Maker*** and ***Reader's Digest***, with a soupçon of ***GQ***. Warning: to avoid disappointment before you turn to my nude centrefold poster, I'm afraid management **YET AGAIN** (Editor's note: good use of bold) decided to censor the old crown jewels. They were concerned it would frighten people, and that's despite the fact it was unseasonably cold that day. Anyway, talking of celebrity junk, there's loads more waiting for you inside. Gorillaz goes to the pub with a bloke called Jamie Hewlett, Russel gets possessive about possession, Noodle goes crate-digging, and 2D talks an absolute load of bollocks about synthesisers, 'cos we ran out of time to commission anything better.

So, it just leaves me to quote Stephen King: "To write is human; to edit is divine." My thoughts exactly, Stephen. I'm a fucking god. Laters, Humanz! Oh, and ♐◆♍&□♐♐!

Murdoc Niccals

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GORILLAZ A-Z OF 2017

2D, Murdoc, Noodle, and Russel recount their memories of what seemed like the most fucked up year in human history.

A – America

If ***Humanz*** was a movie (and it fucking should be) then the set would be America, 'cos it's well on course to becoming a dystopian sci-fi nightmare under the thumb of that psychotic, mop-headed super-villain. I'd be the hero, naturally, Noodle the face-breaking sidekick, Russel the muscle, and 2D would sweep up after the fight scenes. Murdoc

B – Brexit

I was recently marooned on an island cut off from the rest of the world, and it was really lonely. When you only have yourself to talk to, you start to go mad and eat your socks. I would hate that to happen to the British public. 2D

C – Chicago

Humanz – cut that record and it bleeds Chicago, know what I mean? Peven, Tone, Rusha T, Jamie Principle – imagine all those dudes in a warehouse, one night only. End of days, man. That's the album right there. Russel

D – Demon Dayz

Out on the very edge of this world (Margate) we built a portal to a new place, where dark was light and light was dark. There was also candy floss. And a roller coaster. Noodle

E – Ecstasy

Highs come in many forms, and I've tried the fucking lot. Uppers, downers, shafters, and twatters. I've even rubbed Guatemalan arrow frogs onto my balls until I could see the future. But lately, there's no greater high than a long soak in a deep, hot bath. I'm in one right now. So can we hurry this up, please? Murdoc

F – Fucked Up

The whole world feels like this at the moment. Humanity has lost its way, like a drunk man trying to ride a Segway to Margate without Google maps. That's a metaphor, and also what happened to Murdoc on the way to Demon Dayz. 2D

G – G Foot

It's not easy being a muse for a clothing line. You can't buy style, but you can buy G FOOT! So buy G Foot. Noodle

H – Humanz

An epoch-shifting record, and a new phase for Gorillaz sonically, as well as for the human race. For better or worse, we're all sleep-walking into the big black hole. Fuck knows how it ends, but we might as well make something beautiful out of it. Murdoc

I – IT the Clown

I've been involved in a drive by shooting, possessed by demons, harpooned off the Japanese coast, and once I walked in on Murdoc having a shower, but let me tell you... That film ***IT***? That's the scariest shit I've ever seen. Russel

J – Japan

I FINALLY agreed to come home this year. It was okay. Beheaded a demon, meditated in Aokigahara AND headlined Fuji Rock. Noodle

K – Krumping

Big year for the Krump (yeah, that's a K, not a T). Where I grew up we had a saying: "Don't run before you can krump." In my hood we start krumping in diapers. There's a nice image for y'all, lil' Russ shaking his powdered baby booty. Aww. Russel

L – Liz Dawn

RIP Liz Dawn, better known as Vera Duckworth in ***Coronation Street***. She was on telly for 34 years. That's even longer than ***Bagpuss***. 2D

M – Maazu

Like a demogorgon, but before they were cool. Maazu was a shapeshifting hell demon whose head I removed. We now use his skull in the living room as an ashtray. Noodle

N – NottingHill Carnival

I love how you can just be your true self at Carnival. Even if your true self is a seven-foot angel made of peacock feathers and papier mache. 2D

O – Occult

I strongly believe in the power of the waning crescent moon. A good time to meditate or simply perform a new hex. Noodle

P – Pickle

Do you lick a pick a day? Murdoc

Q – Queues

At every stop on the Humanz World Tour, so many Humanz! Noodle

R – Revolution

It's in the air. We all smell it. That mix of hope and despair, and I don't just mean Murdoc's aftershave. Things gotta change, gotta shake themselves up. We got the power! Russel

S – Spirit House

Murdoc made us crash a house party in Detroit. He said it was the party to end all parties, but I disagree as there weren't even any balloon animals. Just unfriendly demons and interplanetary wormholes. At least there was free Popcaan. 2D

T – Twats

I believe 2017 was The Year Of The Twat. Too many to name here, but you know who they are. Murdoc

U – Uber

I've been doing Uber driving at nights since Murdoc cut my allowance. Unfortunately, I haven't had any customers yet. Apparently there's an app that makes the whole process a lot easier, but I prefer the old school way. 2D

V – Vince Staples

"Sky's falling baby drop that ass 'fore it crash" – that's the mantra for 2017 right there, folks, courtesy of my man, Vince Staples. Believe. Russel

W – Worlds

Let's face it, this one is doomed. So, I'm planning on moving to Kepler-452b, earth's big old cousin. Noodle

X – X Rated

The original video for 'Saturnz Barz'. It first came out with my dragon swinging freely, but management feared it might break the internet and spark a global economic meltdown, like in ***Mr Robot***. So, the cowards pixelated it. Murdoc

Y – Year of the Fire Rooster

Babies born in 2017 are roosters, which means they will be attention-seeking, natural leaders, and courageous. It also means they will wake you up really early in the morning by crowing, and that if you eat them, they taste best in a Southern-fried coating. Noodle

Z – Zombies

They're everywhere, man. The living dead, mindless ghouls stumbling around without a freakin' shred of autonomy left. Put your smartphones down and smell the roses, people. 'Cos they ain't fresh! Russel

SPOTTED!

The best looks from the pathways and pedestrianised areas of Greater London.

Eric
28, Fisherman

What are you listening to?
I love the new Gorillaz album, *Humanz*. It's a total masterpiece.

What are you wearing?
My jacket is from G Foot, a wonderful new clothing line from Gorillaz. My bottoms are just weather resistant slacks I wear to work. I'm a fisherman, you see.

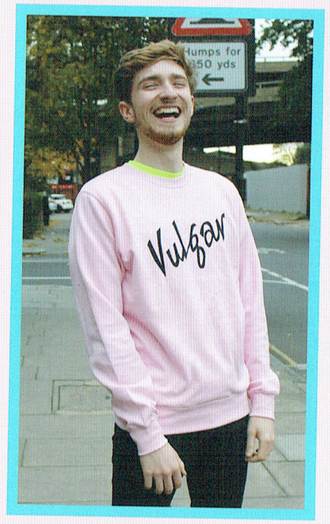
What's good about your life?
I fish for pleasure, not for money, so every day feels like a blessing.

Lisa
23, Bucket Maker

What are you listening to?
I can't stop listening to 'Garage Palace' by British band Gorillaz, featuring Little Simz. It's a real toe-tapper.

What are you wearing?
G Foot... If you don't know what that is, you're not trying hard enough.

What's good about your life?
I get a lot of pride and satisfaction from the buckets I make for people, but I think the best thing right now is that song I mentioned, 'Garage Palace'. Honestly, you gotta hear it dude.



Derek
30, Freelance Funeral Director

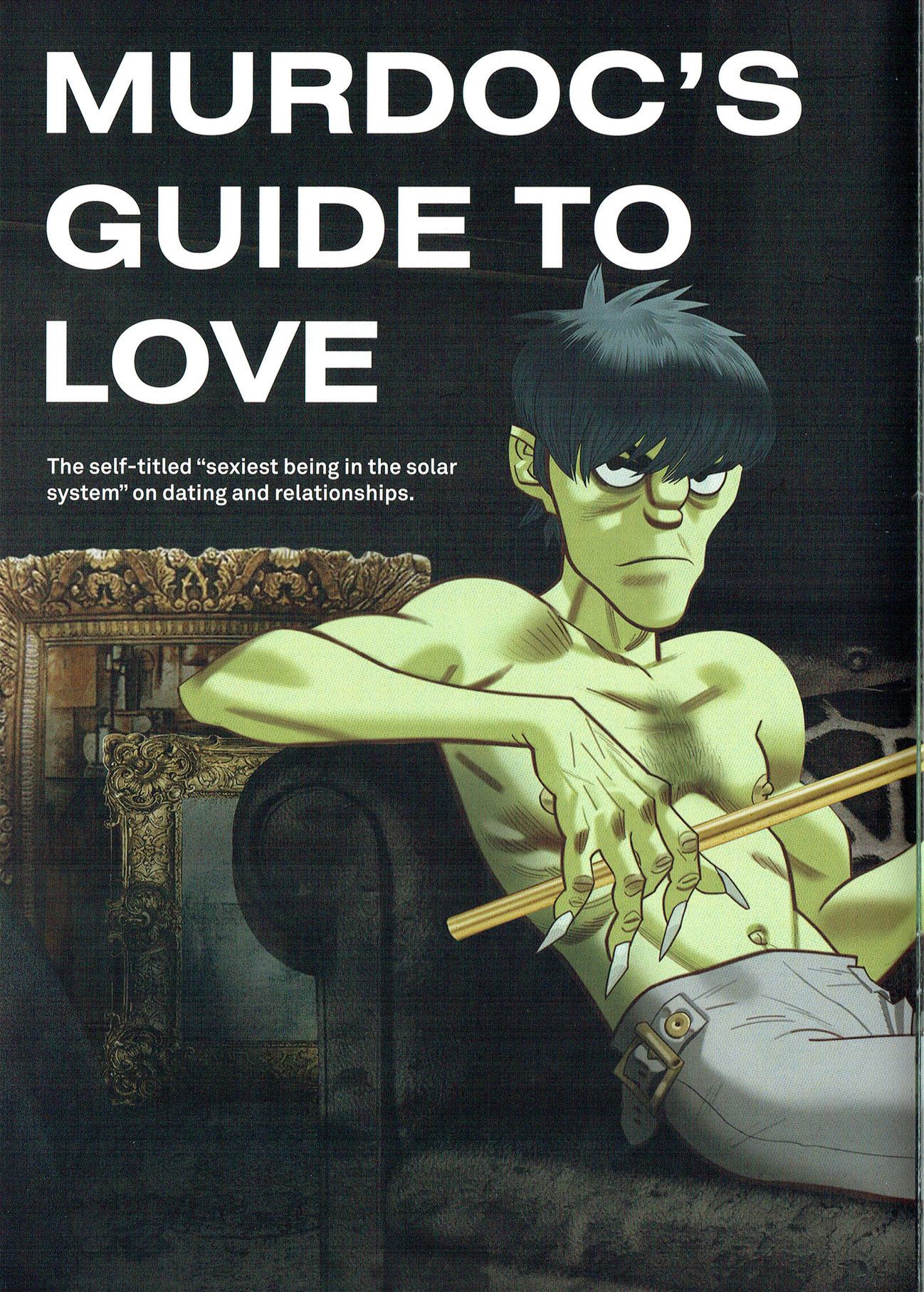
What are you listening to?
I spend most of my days listening to requiems and hymns, but in my chill time I like to kick back and stick on *Humanz* by UK band, Gorillaz. Heard of them?

What are you wearing?
This old thing? Oh it's just your classic pink ringspun cotton crew neck sweatshirt from eu.gfoot-store.store/uk.

What's good about your life?
Despite working in the industry of death, I'm a pretty happy guy who's always laughing. Especially today, my mate just got us tickets to see Gorillaz at The O2 in London on December 4th!

MURDOC'S GUIDE TO LOVE

The self-titled "sexiest being in the solar system" on dating and relationships.



Hello Murdoc. Tell us, how would you describe your love life?
Like primordial soup. Prehistoric and full of bacteria, and yet ready to evolve into something more complex. Yeah, that's right, Murdoc Niccals is changing. Transitioning. Not surgically. Emotionally. Much like the human race right now. The old me sank into the magma like Arnie at the end of *Terminator*. And now, Murdoc 2.0 is rising like *Kindergarten Cop* Arnie. More respectful, more romantic. Still a formidable lover, of course. But now with a massively enlarged heart, too. Partly as a result of coronary artery disease, but mostly due to an increased capacity for love.

Is it hard to date when you're famous?
Famous? I'm not famous, mate. Chris Packham is famous. I'm a living fucking legend. An Immortal. I stand outside time. The rest of humanity are like tiny little birds perching dumbly on the shoulder of my statue. A statue cast in glittering bronze – my chiselled features fixed for all of time – with an epitaph that says, "Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!" Well, that's my Tinder profile, anyway. Then I end it with, "I like to love and laugh, let's have an adventure together!" That last bit might be a bit clichéd, as I'm not getting a lot of hits.

Can you remember your first kiss?
Kelly O'Driscoll, on a school trip to Tipton silage plant. What a woman, total knockout. Literally. She clocked me square on the sternum with a full haymaker. The kicks to the body then sealed the deal. You never forget the first girl that broke your heart. Nor the first girl that broke your pelvis, and four vertebrae. She went on to compete in Britain's Strongest Women. Still holds the record for the truck pull.

What is the most romantic thing you've ever seen?
The X-rays of my shattered body, after my pummelling from Kelly. I had them framed. They say love hurts – well I was in traction for twelve weeks, every movement pure agony. What could be more romantic than that?

Have you ever been dumped?
How fucking dare you.

What is the perfect chat up line?
My top secret blend of coke, Icelandic snuff, and Guatemalan coffee grounds. Hoover up a line of that and you'll chat up anything. I once spent an hour at a party charming the pants off a European bird called ÅRSTID. Turned out to be one of those IKEA floor lamps. Embarrassing, really. Particularly as she's towards the bottom end of their lighting range. At least if she was a KLABB I'd have had something to boast about after.

> *"Had a fling with this really powerful Russian woman for a while, ex-KGB. She loved to surprise me: trip wires, armed ambushes, IEDs."*

Where does the perfect date take place?
For me, a quarry. Had some lovely afternoons with Kelly at the slate pit back in Stoke-on-Trent. Used to take some cherry bakewells and a thermos of cider, and just sit on the edge, watching the JCBs hauling gravel. Quite the aphrodisiac, too, all that dirt and hydraulics. You could say the earth moved. Well, course it did – it's a fucking quarry.

"I once pretended to like Muse for twenty-six and a half minutes to impress a girl. Almost died. I still have PTSD flashbacks."

How do you dress for the perfect date?
Overalls and a hard hat.

What food should be served?
Music being the food of love, I always recommend a three-course meal of Gorillaz. With a side salad of a shit-load of booze.

What do you look for in a partner?
I don't like the word partner. We're not running a fucking start-up. Although you could look at a relationship like a start-up. Most of them fail miserably within the first year. Or there's the inevitable dispute over financial assets further down the line. Or you go for broke, put your balls on the table, end up a stuttering mess and get publicly shamed by sadists in business suits. Hang on, that last one is just *Dragons' Den*. But you get the analogy.

Do you agree with the idea that opposites attract?
They do say that. They also say money can't buy you love, so they've obviously not seen the remarkable things coming out of those Japanese doll factories lately. We're talking fully operational sex bots. But to answer your question: going on the accepted wisdom that I'm one of the most talented and sexually coveted beings on the planet, the direct opposite of that is some kind of sea sponge. So, of course not.

If someone wanted to do a romantic gesture for you, what should it be?
I love romantic surprises. Had a fling with this really powerful Russian woman for a while, ex-KGB. She loved to surprise me: trip wires, armed ambushes, IEDs – I'd never know where or when she'd strike. Really spiced things up. Sadly, it turned out she was on a Soviet hit list and eventually got nabbed by Interpol, and now she's in a gulag. Guess it just wasn't meant to be.

What is the most irrational thing you've ever done for love?
I once pretended to like Muse for twenty-six and a half minutes to impress a girl. Almost died. I still have PTSD flashbacks. But love is a complex thing. As old Nietzsche puts it, "There is always some madness in love. But there is also always some reason in madness." And Nietzsche went mad and died of syphilis, so he should bloody know.

What is the sexiest song in the universe?
Great question. I'd have to say 'Take My Breath Away' by Berlin. Remember that ditty from *Top Gun*? Every time I hear it, boom: Mach 2 in Murdoc's cockpit. And if I need to slow things down a bit, I just picture a shirtless Tom Cruise playing volleyball on the beach. Actually, that sometimes backfires.

What do you do if a crush of yours already has a partner?
I'm going to pretend you didn't say "crush" and just soldier on. If I really, really fancied a bird and she already had someone else, I'd respectfully give him space... By having him kidnapped and left in the middle of a vast and featureless desert.

If you were going to end a relationship, would you tell the truth or make up a reason? For example: it's not you, it's me.
I think it was Buddha who said, "Three things cannot be long hidden: the Sun, the Moon, and the truth." I'd add a fourth – Rasputin's cock. Unless he was wearing particularly spacious Cossack trousers, and even then, there'd be an ominous bulge. I know this because I have it, pickled in a jar. It's monstrous, like a brined leg of lamb. The problem with Rasputin was he tried to keep his royal indiscretions a secret, and after the truth came out they lopped off his most prized asset. I keep it to remind me that the truth always finds a way of revealing itself, so better to let it all hang out.

What is your opinion on internet dating?
Risky business. Everyone lies about their age, for a start. It's more like carbon-dating, some of the matches I've got. Not that I'm ageist. Some of my most erotic experiences have been with the elderly, before you judge. In the early '90s I was briefly employed as a boom operator on *Last of the Summer Wine*. Fuck me, that was like the last days of Nero's Rome. And we didn't need the internet for that. Just booze and plenty of Deep Heat for afters.

What is your opinion on polygamy?
If you mean Polygamy, the soft rock band out of Stoke-on-Trent in the early '80s, then I think we were fucking brilliant, despite being savaged by the so-called music journalists of the day. If you mean the other thing, sure. Who are we to judge? Unless of course you are an actual judge, 'cos it's illegal.

What do you think about the tradition of marriage?
No.

Well, how would you act if someone proposed to you?
Course, I get a shit-load of proposals. Thousands every month. So to ease the blow I get 2D to write each one a lovely, personalised rejection letter. Takes him ages, does calligraphy and everything, then mists the paper with Lynx. He works through the night in a little sweatshop I built for him in the garden. Actually, that reminds me, better go shove his dinner under the door. Laters. ■

CRATE-DIGGING:

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE

NOODLE-VERSE

2017 has been a massive year for Gorillaz lead guitarist Noodle. Aside from decapitating a demon in the heart of the Tokyo underworld – as you do – and releasing *Humanz*, she's also become a shrewd cultural tastemaker. It began in January, with her "kick ass women" mix: a continuous stream of music that celebrates the female artists who have inspired her over the years, featuring everyone from electronic music pioneer Delia Derbyshire to the conceptual artist and musician Fatima al Qadiri. Since then, her G-Mix on Spotify has become a breaking ground for new talent, as Noodle gives props to fresh artists like Lully and Tarantina.

Not many people have ever had the honour or audacity to enter Noodle's private property, and yet today she's agreed to welcome us in to explore her vast music collection. In her tranquil room in the Gorillaz house, she sits on the floor surrounded by Kilimanjaro-esque mountains of vinyl records, as an ocean of guitars, samplers, and drum machines covers the floor, and her cat Katsu sleeps in a guitar case in the corner. She buzzes around the room, picking up cherished 12"s, telling us the story, before being immediately distracted by another that's caught her eye. The resulting interview is a crate-digging conversation that wanders all the way from Black Flag to Stevie Wonder via some soothing sheep bleating.

Tell us about a record from your collection that you'd say is a stonewall classic.

This one: ***Le Mystère Des Voix Bulgares: Volume*** 2 by Le Mystère Des Voix Bulgares. Originally released in 1988 on 4AD, it's a Bulgarian folk female choir who are equal parts haunting and uplifting. I regularly meditate to it. I opened my now famous Kick-Ass Women mix with a track from this record called 'Kaval Sviri', which, weirdly, Lady Gaga just used to open her documentary [*side eyes*].

Listen to: 'Kaval Sviri'

What's your best new discovery of late?

Ifan Dafydd! His music makes me feel like I'm melting – in a good way. I know very little about him other than he is Welsh, and that Wales must be a really nice place because he hasn't released any new music in years (remixes don't count). What are you doing Ifan?

Listen to: 'Celywdd' (feat. Alys Williams)

What about an album that makes you feel ecstatic?

15 million light years away, in the constellation Hydra, is a barred spiral galaxy called Messier 83 – it's like an explosion of pure beauty. You should see it, and then you should listen to 'Hurry Up We're Dreaming' by M83. They go together perfectly, as planned. "Hurry up we're dreaming" means you're rushing into fantasy. Rushing into fantasy is like rushing into a supermassive black hole. It's a rebirth, every time we awake from a dream we are reborn.

Listen to: 'Outro'

How about an album for when you're alone?

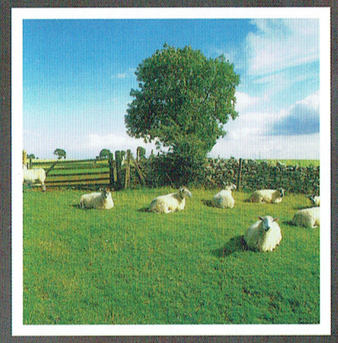
That would be Mazzy Star's ***So Tonight That I Might See***. This is perfect for the bath, as it's about yourself and the conversations you have with yourself when you're meditating. When she sings, "I look to you and I see nothing, I look to you and I see the truth" she's looking at her own reflection, she's fading into herself, deep introspection, the way you feel when you're alone but not lonely.

Listen to: 'Fade Into You'

What about a record that makes you want to get mad and break stuff?

Anything by Black Flag. Particularly 'Rise Above'. It's the original middle finger salute to everything we've come to hold dear. Get rid of your possessions if you don't want them to possess you. Sometimes when you break stuff, you break free of stuff, know what I mean?

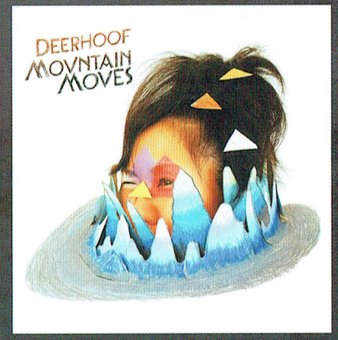
Listen to: 'Rise Above'



What album helps you sleep at night?

Definitely ***Chillout*** by the KLF. It's the first album I heard with sheep bleating in it, but not the first time I'd heard Tuvan throat singing, although I suppose hearing Murdoc do that in the bath doesn't really count. It's also the first real ambient album I'd ever heard.

Listen to: 'Wichita Lineman Was a Song I Once Heard'



Which artist do you own the most vinyl for?

Deerhoof. I just love it when they put out a record with no warning whatsoever. Their latest album, ***Mountain Moves***, is no exception. If Murdoc sabotages Gorillaz, the first person I'd call would be Satomi Matsuzaki, because we would be the best duo in the world. If you're reading this Satomi, get in touch. (***Editor's note: don't you dare Satomi!***)

Listen to: 'Con Sordino'

Finally, play me something that changed the way you thought about music.

Innervisions by Stevie Wonder: the sound of a blind man making you see things from his perspective. I heard that he once blindfolded his record bosses and put them on a bus so they could see the world from his point of view.

Listen to: 'Living In The City'. ■

666

SYNTHS ARE MY FRIENDS

BY STUART POT

Hello everyone and welcome to my article, 2D: Synths Are My Friends, which is going to be about how synthesisers are my friends. I use the future tense 'going to be' because when I wrote that bit I hadn't written the rest of it. But now I will.

When the editor said to me, "No, you can't write a feature about how synths are your friends, that sounds really fucking shit," I felt a bit disheartened. But then the editor got drunk on Pornstar Martinis and ran out of time to write anything else. So, without further ado, it's my pleasure to introduce to you [*Editor's note: JUST FUCKING GET ON WITH IT YOU TIT*] my feature, 2D: Synths Are My Friends...

So, what are synthesisers, you ask? Very good question, I reply. A synth is a kind of musical replicant. A robot that does a human job. Except instead of hunting down and murdering other synthesisers, it makes music. You need to have watched ***Blade Runner*** to understand that metaphor. If you haven't, here's a metaphor using sandwiches: synths are a lot like sandwich toasters, except they make music instead of sandwiches full of burning hot fillings that melt your insides.

"I was hungry, ravenous, and my stomach rumbled for the sweet-tasting sound of synth."

Actually, that's how I felt when I first heard synth music – like my insides were melting. It was the soundtrack to the famous romantic comedy, ***A Clockwork Orange***. I was watching it on a date with my girlfriend Paula, until she threw-up and ran out halfway through. I think the synth sound was a bit much for her. But for me, it was life-changing. It sounded like nothing else on Earth.

I found out afterwards that the music was composed by Wendy Carlos, who also did the music for other Stanley Kubrick movies, including ***The Shining*** and ***Home Alone 2***. Wendy rose to fame with her amazing album called ***Switched-On-Bach*** in 1968. Here's a cool fact about Wendy – she was born a man, and became one of the first famous people to do gender reassignment surgery. So, she was ground-breaking in more ways than one (i.e. two).

Hang on, I'm just nipping to the loo...

I'm back now.

Listening to Wendy's music was a window into a new world. And once I'd climbed through that window there was no going back, because it was the type that locked from the inside. I was hungry, ravenous, and my stomach rumbled for the sweet-tasting sound of synth. It's all I craved. I was addicted, like when Russel got hooked on pain au chocolat. I just wanted to grind synth down and snort it all up. I was like Russel in a boulangerie. I had it bad. Real bad.

And it got worse. Wendy Carlos was just a gateway synth. Because then I heard Stevie Wonder. Wow, I remember thinking, and also saying out loud, because it was that amazing. Stevie, I learned, used a monstrous mega synth called TONTO. It was so powerful it filled a whole room. A terrifying furnace of wires, knobs and flashing lights, and locked up inside were two boffins, enslaved to their master for five whole years. When they eventually escaped, they'd created some legendary sounds, including three of Stevie Wonder's most influential records, ***Talking Book***, ***Music of My Mind***, and ***Innervisions***.

But just as they broke free from their synth prison, mine only locked around me tighter, like when Murdoc hugs me after an acid flashback. TONTO had lured me into the deepest k-hole of my life: Delia Derbyshire. Delia was the British lady who created the theme to ***Doctor Who***, the greatest synth track ever to be synthesised. I spent a whole month listening to it in my room wrapped in baking foil pretending to be a Dalek. And that's when I realised I had a problem, a serious problem that—

Sorry, just nipping out for a snack.

I'm back. (I had a potato waffle).

—needed serious attention. I had to turn my life around. So, I took off the foil, and walked out of my room in slow-motion (while listening to the heroic synth track 'Chariots of Fire' by Vangelis). When I opened the front door and stepped into the new day, I remember thinking how beautiful the world looked, and also how cold it was, because I hadn't been wearing anything under the silver foil and was totally naked.

"Cynthia and I did everything together. We were like R2-D2 and Kenny Baker."

From that day, I vowed to turn my destructive synth habit into something constructive. I was going to build my own synth. So I did. Cynthia, I called her. Or Cynth, to her close friends (2D). I built her from some stuff Noodle stole from a top-secret military laboratory. Cynthia and I did everything together. We were like R2-D2 and Kenny Baker. Life was beautiful again, and I had by my side the greatest friend a man could want. Until Cynthia became sentient and tried to instigate nuclear armageddon, and Noodle had to destroy her with a hammer.

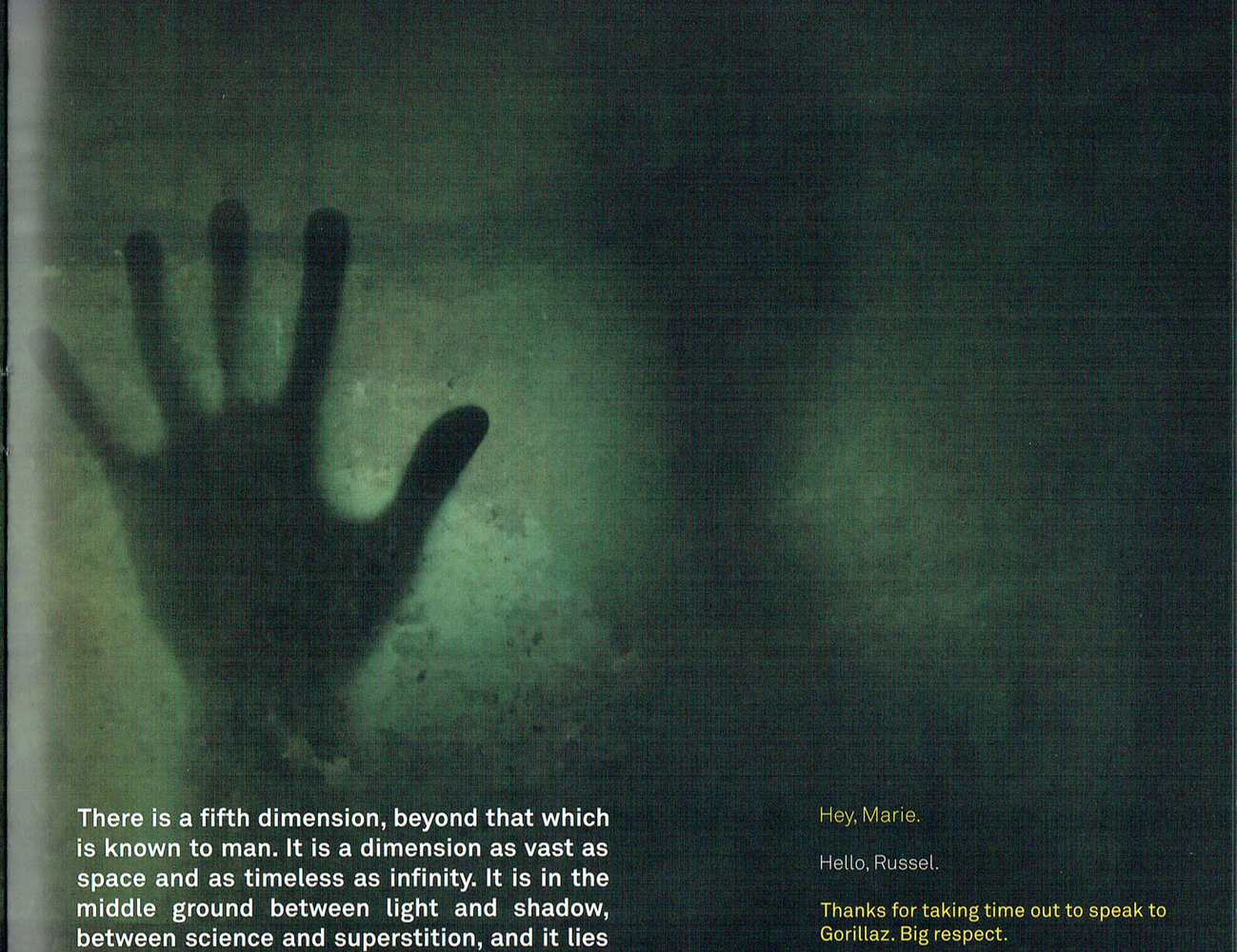
Later, I learned that I wasn't alone, and that many other musicians have formed lifelong friendships with synths, including the great Jean-Michel "Jam" Jarre, as I call him. We became mates when he guest-starred on ***Humanz*** – his nickname for me was garçon and he always gave me the honour of fetching his espresso. "Don't forget cream this time you imbecile," he would shout, warmly. Anyway, JM"J"J wrote one of the most important synth albums of all time, ***Oxygen***. Essential listening, as you can't exist without it (i.e. oxygen).

And I think that is the crux of my article. I don't know exactly what crux means but it sounds right. The point is, whether we like it or not, synths are here to stay. We can't exist without machines anymore. But rather than fight it by buying a banjo and moving to The Isle of Wight, or doing the opposite and overdosing on synths like I did, we've got to find a balance and learn to coexist. Listen to the musical magic that happens when people and machines get along. It's a power for good. But remember, too, that they can also rise up and enslave us all so we should try to be nice. And that, readers, is why Synths Are My Friends. And that, readers, is the last sentence of my article, 2D: Synths Are My Friends.

The End.

Of my article. ■

RUSSEL HOBBS: I BELIEVE IN GHOSTS



There is a fifth dimension, beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is in the middle ground between light and shadow, between science and superstition, and it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. No, it's not *The Twilight Zone*, it's the strange and tumultuous brain of Gorillaz' iconic drummer Russel Hobbs.

Ever since he was a little boy, Russel has experienced events of the paranormal, like when he witnessed his friends get massacred outside a 7 Eleven in New York, and their spirits channelled up into him like a post-Shake Shack vomit in rewind. This is a man whose body has hosted so many demons, his eyes are now a permanent milky white and his voice is a deathly grumble.

So it seems appropriate that on a dark evening in London, we arranged for Russel to sit down and have a conversation with a professional ghost hunter called Marie, who has dedicated her life's work to chasing apparitions through the medieval castles and abandoned country homes of Britain. This is how their conversation went...

Hey, Marie.

Hello, Russel.

Thanks for taking time out to speak to Gorillaz. Big respect.

I've never actually heard of Gorillaz. I don't know what that is. I just enjoy talking about ghosts.

Oh, that's cool. Guess you've been too busy battling demons and cleaning up ectoplasm. Kinda like one of Murdoc's house parties. Anyway... So, Marie, how'd you end up becoming a ghost hunter?

Well, I've always been interested in the paranormal, even when I was a kid. My mum used to say she'd seen ghosts, but I never believed her. As I got older, I got more intrigued. I decided to try out going on some ghost hunts. It's addictive. You do one, you want to go on more and more.

I hear you. Guess we're all hooked on something. 2D, he's into mushrooms – not the trippy kind – button mushrooms. Even keeps one as a pet. But tell me this, Marie: has a ghost ever entered your body, turned your eyes white then busted out some rhymes?

No, not quite. But I saw a few things when I was younger which got me intrigued. When I was staying over at a friend's house, there was a black cat in the bedroom, and I followed it into the bathroom, then suddenly it wasn't there. I mentioned it the next morning, and they said they don't own a cat, have never owned a cat, and they are allergic to them so can't have them in the house.

WHOA! Well either someone spiked your cocoa, or that was a CAT GHOST!! I love cats. Are there other animal ghosts?

We sometimes feel dogs pushing past our legs. That happens a lot on hunts, and we hear barking and scratching. Animals are living too, so they need to go somewhere.

I knew it. Damn right animals got souls! All creatures do. You know what, Marie? People said I was bat-shit crazy. Didn't believe there were ghosts churning around my body – they just figured it was IBS or something. How d'you deal with non-believers?

Everyone has their own opinion. But nobody should ever be ridiculed for what they believe.

I salute that. Truth is truth, can't break it down no matter what they throw at it.

I think people need to experience something before they can believe it.

Yeah, like Gorillaz music (little hint, Marie). So, what's the most badass, shit-got-real, fucked-up ghost run-in you've ever had?

About 5 years ago, I was in an old asylum and we were walking up a corridor. I turned around to speak to the team member behind me, and there was this man leering over him. I looked away and looked back to see if it was my eyes, but it was still there. I didn't hang around to communicate, I ran. When I finally stopped running I immediately began crying. I'm a right wuss!

Ain't no shame in crying. I wept like a little baby at *Scooby-Doo! and the Goblin King* (direct to DVD but a damn masterpiece). So, what did this dude look like?

He had no facial features. He was just a thick blackness and his eyes were piercing, a deep red. I hate red eyes. He must have been about 7 feet tall. He was leering and staring straight at me. I pushed everyone out the way to get away from him.

That's messed-up. On a side point – does anyone actually like red eyes? Usually a warning sign of possession in my book.

I've certainly never seen full blown possession.

Trust me, you don't wanna see it. Let alone feel it. Imagine your whole body being worn like a glove-puppet, and you're on your way.

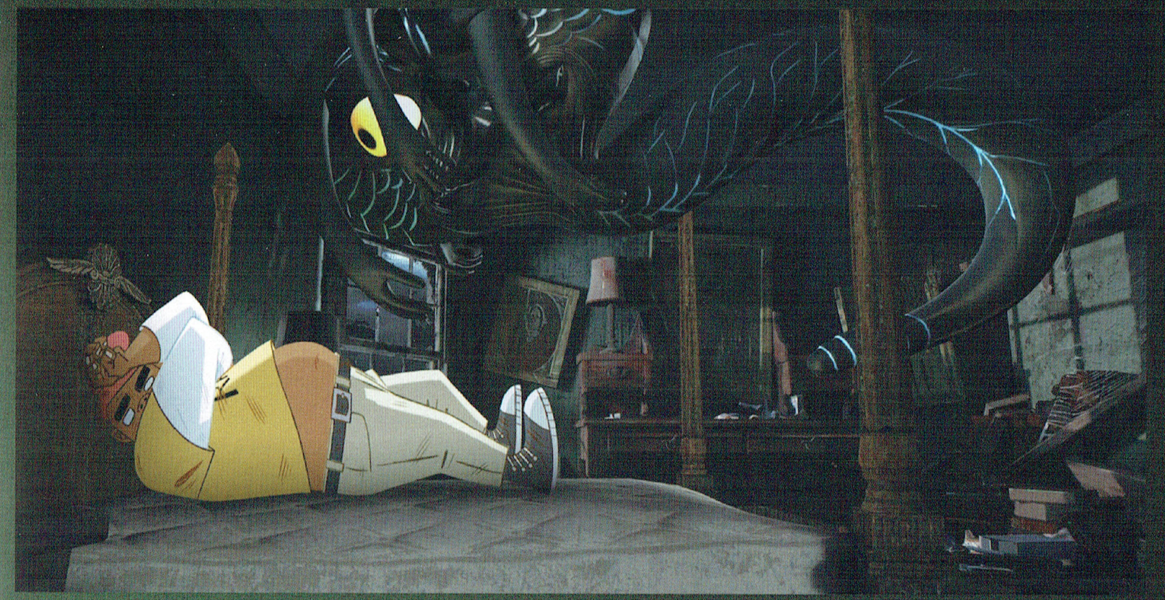
I have seen people being affected by spirits, in which they start feeling overwhelming emotions and get scratched, or feel like they are being strangled, get angry or begin to cry.

Sounds like a soothing day at the spa compared to some of the dark shit I've been through. So what should you do when someone gets possessed?

I take that person out of the area where it's happening, then it should pass very quickly. If it doesn't, we'll ask the spirit to step back from the person and ask the person to come forward. Because we are living, we are the stronger entity. If we want them to back away, then they have no choice.

Ask them nicely? Okay, yeah, I'll be sure to give that a try... So, I sometimes think about the afterlife and where my man Del the Funky Homosapien is right now. Where d'you think we go?

Well, everyone has a soul; the energy and the spirit of your person. It has to go somewhere, although I don't think it goes to some pearly gates in the sky. It'd be nice if it did, but I only believe in things I've seen for myself. I think these spirits do what they want: if they want to stay in a place they'll stay there, if they don't then they'll go elsewhere.



They sound like FREE SPIRITS. Boom! High five! No? Just a little joke. Uh... so where's the most haunted place you've ever been?

My favourite is Manby Hall in Lincolnshire. We've caught so much evidence there: apparitions, voices, we've even been touched. It gets your heart going. You should go there.

What kinda things did you see?

The darkness moves. I know that sounds weird! But you know when you're surrounded by pitch blackness? Sometimes you see that dark move. Other times you put stuff down and when you go back it's gone. We'll hear doors slam where there's no doors. That's because of residual energy, known as Stone Tape theory. That's the theory that the world replays events over and over again like an old film loop. Traumatic things that happened in the past can still be heard replaying if you are looking for them.

That's some freaky shit there, Marie. Trauma repeating itself on an endless film loop. Sounds like the *Saw* franchise. Doesn't all this stuff scare you?

I get scared, it's very unsettling. But at the same time, it's really exciting. That's what you're there for. Everybody gets scared. I've run away a few times.

Hey, listen, don't sweat it. Everybody runs. Well, except Noodle. She kinda enjoys beheading demons. Each to their own, I guess. I like baking croissants. So, what's been happening on your ghost hunts recently?

We were in a building on a hunt the other month, and I went to put two of the guests into a cell, and as I was walking back down the corridor I heard heavy footsteps behind me, then it started to speed up like it was running, and then I felt a whoosh into my back, so I legged it. I was off. Then I got lost in the building and couldn't find anyone.

Uh, can we backtrack a little? You put two guests into a CELL? Okay... Um, well, we're almost out of time. Last question then – do you believe in fate and the Grim Reaper?

I think everyone is on a time limit. Once your time is up, it's up. I believe in fate too. I will never ever tempt fate under any circumstances. The other day, my husband bought a coffin, and he and his friends kept getting in it [for fun], but I refused to. For me, that is tempting fate. But as for the Grim Reaper, no I don't think somebody in a long black cloak comes and fetches us with a scythe.

Wait, he bought a coffin? Like on eBay or something? Yeah, well, seems like a good place to wrap this up. Been great talking to you, Marie. Oh, I got this vinyl copy of *Humanz* signed for you by all the band to say thanks.

I'm actually fine. Thanks for the thought though.

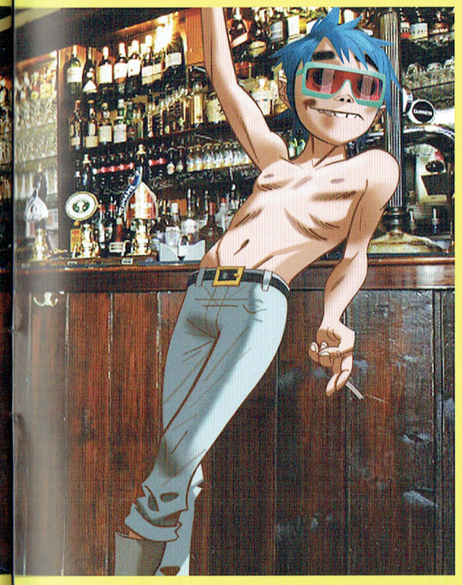
I'll see myself out. ■

Gorillaz meet *Jamie Hewlett*

The scene is The Three-Legged Dog pub in Stoke-On-Trent. Gorillaz sit on one side of the table, Jamie Hewlett on the other. They stare at each other in silence. Murdoc sips a Pornstar Martini. Noodle twirls a switchblade. Russel yawns. 2D strokes his pet mushroom, Paul. A minute of awkward silence goes by.

Then another.

Until...



2D: Hi, Jamie.

Jamie: Hello, 2D.

Russel: So...

Jamie: Yeah?

Noodle: What is it you wanted to ask us?

Jamie: What? I thought you were interviewing me?

Murdoc: Eh? Oh, shit. This is a bit of a balls-up, isn't it? 2D, you're sacked. Give me back that Tipp-Ex.

Noodle: [Sighs] Sorry about this. Okay, so here's a question: you've directed lots of our videos over the years. What was your favourite?

Jamie: I think 'Stylo' was probably my favourite to work on. I really enjoyed going out to the Californian desert and getting stunt drivers, fast cars, police and helicopters. It was like making a very small action movie. Obviously, because Murdoc is an international superstar, we couldn't have him actually drive the car, so we found a stuntman. He was called Nicholas, and he'd been a meth addict for several years. He was the spitting image of Murdoc.

Murdoc: Oh yeah, Nicholas. Handsome bastard. Sadly, he later died filming a stunt sequence for *Poirot*. Anyway, to my question: if money was no object, what sort of music video would you put us in?

Jamie: With the appropriate song, I would attempt to remake the 1979 film, *Caligula*. I'd do a Tinto Brass-meets-Penthouse-meets-Shakespearean production, starring you as Caligula. That would be ideal. The entire story of *Caligula* in four minutes. Pretty good going considering it's over two hours long.

Murdoc: You've read my fucking mind, squire. Let's do it. Right, who's next?

2D: Hi Jamie, 2D here. I hear you've got a book coming out. Congratulations! I'm really pleased to see you finally getting your big break. What's it about?

Jamie: Big break? Fucking wanker. Well, it's a collection of all my drawings and creations from the last twenty five years of my career. It's the stuff I do when I'm not working for you. There's a small section on you guys, but obviously you know that because you had to clear the rights for me to use your images.

2D: A picture book! Cool. I hope there's colouring-in as well.

Murdoc: Shut up, 2D. Jamie, it's said great art can sometimes take on its own life beyond the artist. Do you ever worry that your creations might rise up and destroy you?

Jamie: They already have, many times in the past. But as an artist, I live in the shadows anyway – my creations are in the limelight. If your characters and creations rise up and destroy you, then surely that's a sign you've done yourself justice, Murdoc. Right? You pickle-faced wanker!

Murdoc: Oi! Watch it, mate.

Russel: Stay cool, fellas. In fact, that's what I wanna ask: how *do* you stay cool when you're so damn old?

Jamie: I can't answer that, because if I had any indication I was cool, I would immediately cease to be cool.

2D: Like if fish suddenly understood they were underwater, they would all drown.

Jamie: [...].

Noodle: Do you enjoy being our personal stylist, Jamie?

Jamie: Noodle, you are my favourite person to style, because you are a blossoming young woman who is adaptable and looks great in everything. Whereas you, Murdoc, you're like John Cusack. There's a famous story about him: he always wears the same brown raincoat and will never take it off. Murdoc is similar. Whenever I try something new, it just doesn't work.

Murdoc: I've told you, mate – with me, you peaked at trilby and leopard-print thong.

2D: Hi Jamie. Murdoc always tells us he's a musical demigod whose work will live forever. Do you ever think about your legacy?

Jamie: Well, now I have a book out, I guess I have some sort of legacy as long as it stays in print. In this modern digital age – where everything is perishable – to have created a thick, heavy and physical book could act as some sort of legacy. If not, it's perfectly good for smacking someone on the back of the head with.

2D: Or you could buy loads of copies and build a really cool fort?

Jamie: [...]

Russel: Okay, Russ is gonna take us deep now. Jamie, you ever get that messed up feeling some dude is pulling your strings for their own entertainment?

Jamie: No, I have never had that feeling. I have no idea what you're talking about, Russel.

Russel: Open your eyes, brother. The world is a fucked-up funfair, and we're stuck riding the same roller-coaster over and over and OVER AND O–

2D: I love funfairs! My dream job is to run the dodgems. What's your dream job, Jamie?

Jamie: To be a clown in the circus. One of those really sad drunk clowns who spends his day in his trailer applying make-up really slowly, while looking-pissed off into the mirror. When he removes the make-up, he has the exact same facial expression underneath.

Murdoc: Jesus. Reminds me of a bad trip I had once. Kept peeling my face off, but each time it just revealed a different member of the cast of *'Allo 'Allo*. There's a thought: what is the greatest drug of all? And can I have some?

Jamie: Love. And no, you can't have any. You have to find it for yourself.

2D: On the subject of love, do you ever think about death? Where do we go after this? And where do I go after this? My sat nav is broken.

Jamie: Yes, I do think about death, like all of us. I don't panic about it just yet, because I am only forty nine. But maybe in the next ten years I might start worrying about it a little more. I don't know where we go though.

Russel: I know where some of those dead folk go... me. If you could be possessed by any dead artist, who'd you choose and why?

Jamie: Well, it would have to be Pablo Picasso. He always inspired me. He's obvious, but he did so much in his life. He tried everything. He had a fantastic rule that when he went to his studio at 8am, nobody was allowed to interrupt him about anything until 8pm. He spent twelve hours being creative without a single interruption. I would love to live that kind of life.

Russel: Yeah, but Picasso wasn't living in the digital age, man. 'Cos what happens when some computer creates a masterpiece to top Señor Picasso? What then?

Jamie: There was a news story recently that my mate Damon told me about in which two computers – one on the East Coast of America and one on the West Coast – started communicating with each other without anyone pressing any buttons. They were communicating in some sort of strange binary language that didn't make sense to anyone. In the end, they had to unplug them. That's quite worrying. Was it digital baby talk, or something far more sinister? If a computer made a work of art, that's fine. But if they start conspiring against humans, we should worry.

Noodle: Russel does all the worrying for us. So are we humans in decline then? Or are we still evolving?

Jamie: Cor blimey! Good question, Noodle. There is a great deal of indication at the moment that we are in decline. I think the older generation haven't evolved at all really. But I have great hope for the new generation. I think they are evolving in terms of sexism, racism, and how to treat one another, because they've grown up in an environment where everyone is mixed together from an early age.

Noodle: Every generation has its own demons to battle (for me, it's literally demons). What are your demons?

Jamie: My demon is called Bad Jamie. He lives on the left side of my brain. On the right side of my brain is Good Jamie. He tries to live a healthy and wholesome life, and do things right. Bad Jamie wants to fucking destroy everything. I battle with Bad Jamie quite a lot. Usually he comes alive when I drink; that unleashes him. I wake up in the morning with a bad hangover, to the sound of Good Jamie asking what I did last night, and Bad Jamie at the very back of my mind just laughing to himself.

Murdoc: Bloody hell, Bad Jamie sounds like a right arsehole. You might wanna lay off the booze and try to be a better man, like me.

[At this point, Murdoc downs his drink. Jamie eyes him wearily. Awkward silence ensues once more. Until...]

2D: Oh I've thought of another question, Jamie! What do you think is better, rock or roll? And why?

[Jamie stands up, lights a cigarette and walks out the door.]

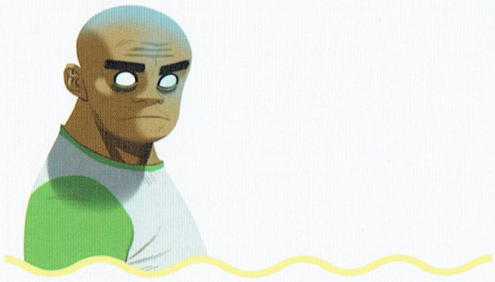
2D: Jamie? Where are you going?

Murdoc: Well, he's scarpered. Probably got bored of your whining, 2D. Garçon! Another round of Pornstar Martinis! Make the invoice out to Monsieur Hewlett, Esquire. Drink up Gorillaz, it's the least we fucking deserve. ■

TRACKS OF THE YEAR

2017 produced more bangers than a sausage factory – Gorillaz pick the cream of the crop.

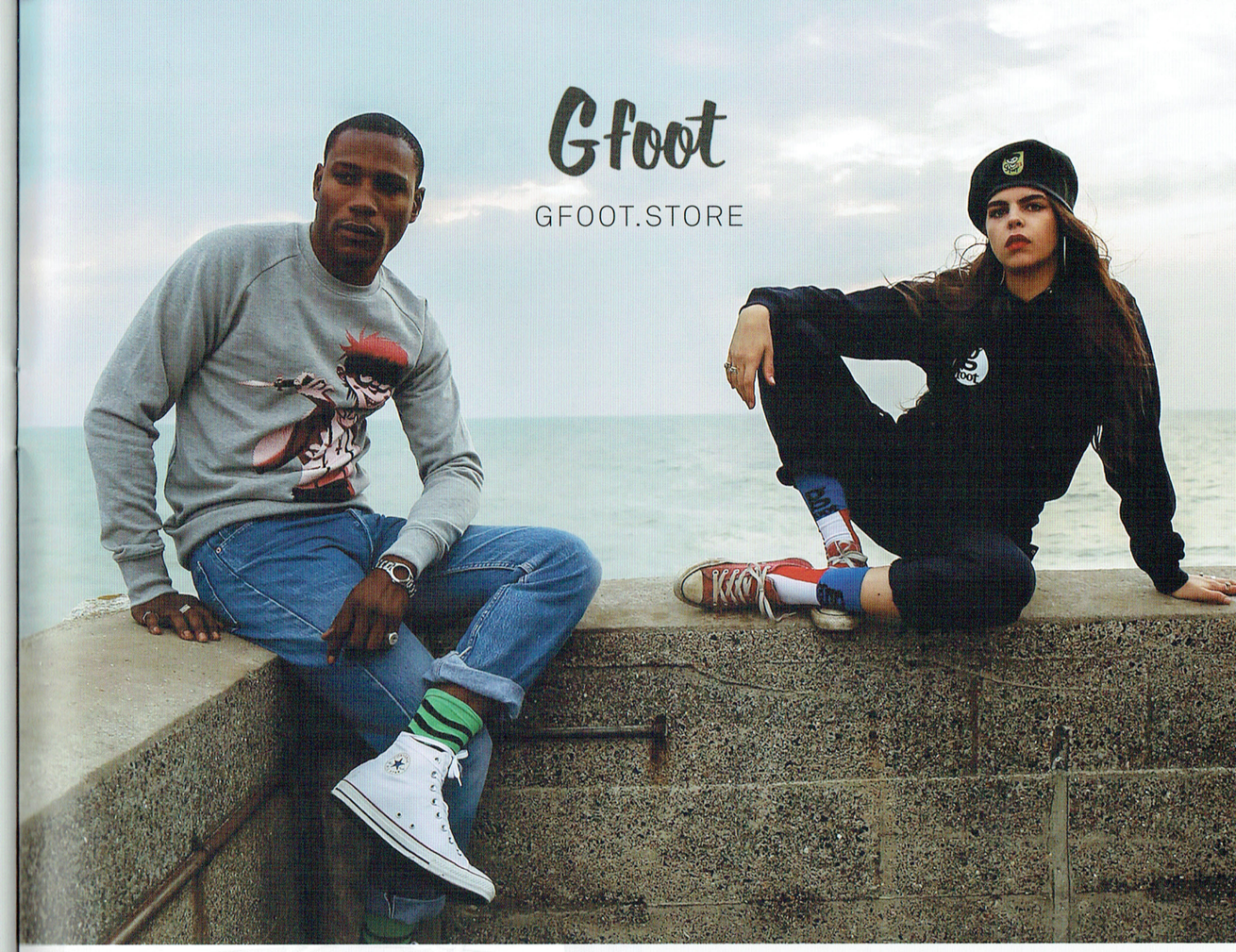
Little Dragon - 'Sweet'
Smerz - 'Because'
Superorganism - 'Something for your M.I.N.D'
Kelela - 'LMK'
Deerhoof - 'Con Sordino'



Vince Staples - 'Crabs in a Bucket'
Little Simz - 'Backseat'
Dave - 'No Words'
MIKE - 'God's With Me'
Vic Mensa & Pusha T - 'OMG'

Rex Orange County - 'Untitled'
Fatima Yamaha - 'Araya'
Mount Kimbie - 'Blue Train Lines' ft. King Krule
Frank Ocean - 'Chanel'
Four Tet - 'Two Thousand and Seventeen'

'Ascension' (ft. Vince Staples)
'Strobelite' (ft. Peven Everett)
'Saturnz Barz' (t. Popcaan)
'Momentz' (ft. De La Soul)
'Submission' (ft. Danny Brown & Kelela)
'Charger' (ft. Grace Jones)
'Andromeda' (ft. DRAM)
'Busted and Blue'
'Carnival' (ft. Anthony Hamilton)
'Let Me Out' (ft. Mavis Staples & Pusha T)
'Sex Murder Party' (ft. Jamie Principle & Zebra Katz)
'She's My Collar' (ft. Kali Uchis)
'Hallelujah Money' (ft. Benjamin Clementine)
'We Got the Power' (ft. Jehnny Beth)
'Garage Palace' (ft. Little Simz)



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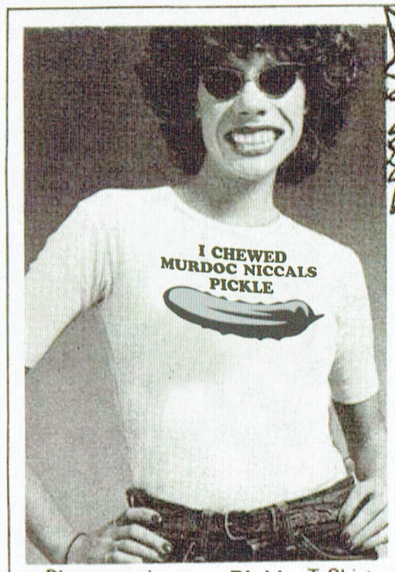

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LAST DAY ON EARTH

BY STUART POT

What would I do on my last day on Earth? Actually, I've already got it planned. Partly 'cos I'm a worrier, but mainly 'cos Murdoc applied for me to join a one-way mission to Mars scheduled for 2024. I don't really want to go as it's a long way and experts say the ship is likely to explode on touchdown, but if I do get picked I'll have to go as Murdoc says the tickets are non-refundable. So, just in case, I've planned that day down to the last detail, 'cos every single second will be precious...

7:00am: Wake up. Hit snooze button and go back to sleep.

7:30am: Wake up. Hit snooze again. Go back to sleep again.

8.00am: Wake up third time. Open eyes. Stand up. Put trousers on.

8:10am: Eat my favourite special occasion breakfast: Egg Benedict (it's an egg with a picture of Benedict Cumberbatch drawn on it).

8:15am: Finish eating Egg Benedict.

8:20am: Ask Murdoc if it's okay to not do my chores today, since it's my last day on Earth.

8:22am: Do my chores.

9:00am: Head out and visit all the places I've always dreamed of seeing: Grand Canyon, Great Wall of China, Northern Lights. (Back-up plan: if there's not enough time, just look at them on Google images).

1:00pm: Hopefully go to a surprise farewell lunch organised by all my friends. If not, phone all my friends and say goodbye. If they don't answer, leave a voicemail.

2:00pm: Donate my life savings (£35.68) to charity.

2:30pm: Take a trip down memory lane, visiting Uncle Norm's Organ Emporium where Murdoc first ran me over (it's a Greggs now), the Brownhouse where we played our first gig (probably also a Greggs), and finally, Memory Lane, the road in Camberwell where I think I left my plimsolls.

3:30pm: Have a sit down.

4:30pm: Write my memoirs. But if there's not enough time, just go to Margate and write "Stu woz ere" in the sand. But above the tide line so it lasts a long time.

5:00pm: Swim with dolphins, or haddock if dolphins aren't available.

6:00pm: Get my affairs in order: tidy room, give music collection to Noodle, and feed Paul, my pet mushroom.

7:00pm: Eat something really special that I've never had before, e.g. raisins.

7:30pm: Post Murdoc's secret footage online of when he was in *Starlight Express*.

8:00pm: Give live farewell speech to humanity on Insta Live. Make sure to wear best hat.

9:00pm: Pack bag for Mars, including sun cream for deadly UV levels due to lack of atmosphere. And a bucket and spade for the sand.

10.00pm: Change WhatsApp status to 'away'.

10:15pm: Finally uncork that bottle of '87 Lilt I've been saving.

11:00pm: Sob uncontrollably.

11:30pm: Double-check that Mars ticket is definitely non-refundable.

11:59pm: Fake my own death (e.g. bazooka accident), then flee North with Paul my mushroom and join the Night's Watch (remember broadsword and hot water bottle).